

The Evolution of ^{PART THREE} Bunker Hill

Former Community Redevelopment Agency Principal Planner Yukio Kawaratani has spent the last few years assembling more than 600 documents, studies, reports and photos relating to the history of Bunker Hill. Parts of these have been turned into the Bunker Hill Historical Presentation, a series of nine poster-

PART THREE OF A NINE-PART SERIES

boards detailing distinct chapters in the evolution of the community. The L.A. Downtown News is running excerpts of the text and photo collection.

THE DECLINE, 1926-1944

Due to its central location, Bunker Hill continued to be a physical and traffic barrier to the city growing up around it. The development of the Central Business District bypassed it by extending southward and then westward. With very few new or replacement buildings for the many aging and deteriorating wooden frame structures built in the decades before and after the turn of the century, Bunker Hill slowly declined. More and more hotels, apartments and mansions were converted into rooms for rent as living on Bunker Hill was no longer fashionable. Modest

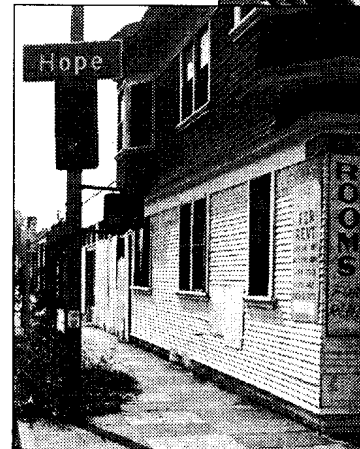
income families, single men and transients found Bunker Hill a convenient place to reside in the center of town. It had a great view. Within walking distance were the many products, services, jobs and transportation facilities of Downtown, and yet it was isolated from traffic, noise and other urban distractions. Artists lived there who, like Leo Politi, loved to make paintings of the old 19th century mansions. The depression of the 1930s heightened the demand for low rent apartments and cheap rooming houses. The population became skewed toward low-income immigrants and transient single men. By the 1940s, the housing stock was severely deteriorated and crime, fires and health conditions worsened. However, any action to alleviate the problems were postponed by World War II, as all housing was needed for new arrivals to the work force.

To see previous installments of "The Evolution of Bunker Hill" visit the L.A. Downtown News website at www.LADowntownNews.com

Next week: The Studies, 1945-1959



Makeshift retaining walls.



Rooms for rent.



A deteriorating wooden apartment building on Bunker Hill.

